

The General Directorate of Rear Services (GDRS)--a staff component of the High Command of the Armed Forces of North Vietnam (HCAFNV)--maintains cognizance of personnel and material resources used for military purposes in North Vietnam, Laos and the Republic of Vietnam. The mission of carrying out these logistic related duties is levied on various line elements directly subordinate to the GDRS.

An elaborate system of line organizations task-organized to carry out logistics missions stretches south and west from North Vietnamese staging and training areas into the Laos Panhandle, South Vietnam and Northern Laos. In North Vietnam, Group 500 has been tasked with command responsibilities for GDRS operations within that country, while a sister organization, the 559th Transportation Group, controls logistics forces in the Laos panhandle.

Immediate subordinates of these commands--the 500th and 559th--are designated BINH TRAMS (literally military stations) and are strategically placed along routes of movement in NVN and Laos. These BINH TRAMS (BT) approximate regimental echelon headquarters and have infantry, AAA, engineer, medical, transportation, maintenance and administrative units of company and battalion echelon attached for combat and service support. Intermediate stations, designated Commo-liaison stations, provide troop billeting and messing and road repair support along lines of communications (LOC) connecting the BT's and make up another portion of the GDRS system.

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It is through this network that personnel and cargo move to Communist battlefields to the west and south. At the completion of training or refitting phases, NVA personnel begin their journey to these battlefields. They travel in groups usually of battalion size, as organic table of organization units, or in smaller sized packets of specialized personnel via train, truck, barge and on foot to their destinations. Cargo which is stockpiled at various key areas enters the system and is transported via similar means toward distant tactical areas. Based on 1968 statistics, this system is capable of handling a minimum of 200,000 infiltrating personnel annually and 2,200 tons of all types of supplies each month.

The communications network which serves the logistics arm of the NVA consists of radio (Morse, radio-telephone and probably printer), telephone (long haul trunk lines and local wire facilities) and courier services. This vast network links the GDRS with immediate and specified functional subordinates and some of these subordinates communicate laterally with each other and with their subordinates. Command and functional (e.g. air defense, convoy control, etc) radio nets exist at most echelons. The primary modes of radio transmission are Morse (CW) and Voice (FM), and radio-printer may be used in North Vietnam on common user multi-channel facilities.

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